GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5187
ANSWERED ON:05.04.2017
Mining of Rare Earth Minerals
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Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a)whether the Government proposes to form Joint Ventures (JV) for mining ofrare earth minerals with Industrial Development Corporation Orissa Limited, Indian Rare Earth Limited and foreign based companies and if so, the details and the terms of JV thereof;

(b)whether the Government has proposed to start collaboration with Japan with regard to the mining of the said minerals and if so, the details thereof;

(c)whether the Government proposes to involve private miners in the mining of Monazite minerals and other beach sand minerals and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the other steps taken by the Government to make the country self-reliant in aforementioned minerals?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (Dr. JITENDRA SINGH):

(a)Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL) is in the process of forming a Joint Venture (JV) with Industrial Development Corporation Orissa Limited (IDCOL) for mining of BSM which, inter alia, includes Monazite. The proposed JV has been cleared by the Board of IREL and Government of Odisha. The shareholding of IREL & IDCOL in the JV Company will be in the ratio of 51% and 49% respectively. No foreign based company is a part of the above proposed JV. The JV agreement has not yet been signed.

(b)No, Sir.

(c) Private miners are already involved in the mining of Beach Sand Minerals (BSM). However, the Monazite (prescribed substance as per the Atomic Energy Act, 1962) which is produced during the Mineral Separation Process is not processed by the private miners. It is stored as per guidelines stipulated by AERB. For the purpose of conservation of Monazite, Ministry of Mines has published the Atomic Minerals Concession Rules (AMCR), 2016 in July 2016. As per the AMCR, BSM deposits containing Monazite above a particular threshold value will be reserved for winning by agencies to be nominated by the Government. Further, the BSM deposits containing Monazite below threshold value will be open for all, however, monazite generated during the mineral separation process, needs to be disposed as per guidelines of AERB.

(d)To make the country self-reliant, the following steps have been taken :

(I)Monazite, which is found in association with other beach sand minerals, is the only source of rare earths in India. For the purpose of conservation of monazite,AMCR 2016 were notified by the Ministry of Mines.

(II)Further, to explore mineral resources abroad, the following steps have been taken:

(a)A Joint Working Group (JWG) has been constituted by the Ministry of Mines on co-operation in the field of Mineral resources development with Malawi.

(b)A separate Joint Working Group (JWG) has been constituted by the Ministry of External Affairs (East Asia Division) for Rare Earths and Civil Nuclear Co-operation with Mongolia.

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